

Let's start thinking about
finding the maths

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Finding the maths in family activity

In workshops we have run in other schools, parents spoke about all sorts of activities that they did with their children, or activities their children did. You may be surprised at how much maths there is in activities we do in everyday life. Here are some examples.

Choosing a biscuit

At a family meal, there was a plate of all sorts of different biscuits. The children could choose a biscuit each. Some children took quite some time to decide which biscuit to choose. A starting question such as "Why did you choose that biscuit?" can lead to all sorts of mathematical talk.

I want that one because there are not many of them...

A child might choose a biscuit because it is rare, and therefore desirable.

What is the likelihood of the biscuit being there later if I don't take it now? Will someone else eat it?

This is about probability.

I like that one best, then that one, then that one... that one has more chocolate on it, but that one looks nicer...

This is about order of preference, and weighting of different attributes - is the amount of chocolate, or what the biscuit looks like more important?



I like the flavour of the smaller one best, but I will choose the bigger one because I am hungry.

This introduces ideas about relative size and proportion, as well as about priority.

Going to the park

Sometimes parents went with their children to the park so the children could play football or other games. The journey to and from the park can raise all sorts of mathematical ideas.

How long will it take us to get there? Is it different if we go a different way or use a different type of transport? Why is that?

Is it easier or quicker getting there or getting home again? Why might that be?



How likely is it that the bus will be late? What time of day is it and how much traffic is there?

If it is a sunny day, shall we walk a longer way, past lots of interesting places? Is it OK to take longer but have more fun on the journey?

Does it take longer to walk up hill? Does the bus go a different way?

There are three important things to remember here:

- 1 You don't need a really strict definition of maths - maths is very closely related to science, geography, music, art and all sorts of other subjects - so there is no need to worry about defining maths.
- 2 You don't have to use what you see as maths language either - it's just sharing ideas that is important. These examples we use are deliberately not the kind of thing you would expect to find in maths school books - we want to show you that maths is everywhere.
- 3 You might also notice that in the examples, we use a lot of questions. This is important and we will look at this more in the next leaflet. It can be really good fun, and really help your child's learning, just to explore ideas and think about how we could find things out - we don't always need to know the right answer!



For further information, visit
www.everydaymaths.org

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More ideas for everyday maths activities
can be found at
www.nnparenttoolkit.org.uk

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